

NEWARK PARTNERSHIP FOR LEAD SAFE CHILDREN

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, August 3, 1998

The meeting was attended by:

John Weber	New Jersey Citizen Action	732-246-4772
Anthony Wright	New Jersey Citizen Action	732-246-4772
Bernadine Smith	Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies	973-242-2422
Candy Lively	Friendly Fuld Head Start	973-762-5577
Dawn Fisher	Newark Pre-School Council	973-621-5760
Cathy Malmstrom	New Jersey Citizen Action	201-488-2804
Marcia Schoolmaster	Programs for Parents	973-733-4077
Wayne Smith	Black Urban Alliance	973-371-4518
Myles O'Malley	White Lung Association	201-758-1590
Annette Reese	Blessed Sacrament	973-639-1737
Gregory Jost	Newark Emerg. Serv. for Families	973-643-5727
Antonia Ty M.D.	NJ Physician's Lead Advisory Bd.	201-569-0410
Nicole Warhoffig	Greater Newark Conservancy	973-642-4646
Lisa Leal		
Kathleen O'Pray	Catholic Community Services	973-596-4100
Elizabeth Piano	Gateway Maternal Child Health Consortium	973-926-7353
Myles Varley	Boys and Girls Club of Newark	973-242-1200
Brenda Craig	Ad House	973-372-0457
Jacqueline Rosario	Ironbound Community Corp.	973-344-7208
Evelin Hernandez	St. Columba Neighborhood Club	973-624-4222
Jeannette Miller	HUD Tenants Coalition	973-643-7711
Steven Marcus M.D.	NJ Poison Info. and Education System	973-926-7443
Kevin McNally	NJ Dept of Health	609-292-5666
Chitra Netravali M.D.	Newark Dept. of Health - Pediatrics	973-733-5614
Gina Lucas	Association for Children of NJ	973-643-9153
Tracy Tener	Summit Bank	908-709-6368
Lewis Hurd	Summit Bank	908-709-6371

The meeting began with a presentation from Summit Bank about the various loan products available for lead abatement. (See enclosed). There are however, some hurdles to overcome in getting these loans to the people who need them. Summit pointed out the main obstacle in giving the loans is people's bad credit. Also, the requirement that certified contractors are used has driven the cost of abatement up: the average cost for an abatement job is roughly \$15,000.

It was mentioned that the contractors often choose a method of work that is easier for them, but more expensive, i.e. replacing windows. There is nobody to oversee the "scope of work" and keep costs down, so more work gets done, and the cost of the job goes up. It might be possible to influence new State regulations being written to consider this.

A forum in Irvington was mentioned where NJCA, Irvington, and Summit reached out to landlords in violation to make them aware of the loans. Of twenty participants, four applied, and one got the loan. The group felt that while it would be good for the bank to take a second (or third) look at the 3 denied applicants, the real concern should be those who did not apply. In fact, it was estimated that of all the lead cases identified, only about 10% get abated.

There was general discussion about some of the problems encountered in lead abatement, and the process that is followed leading up to abatement.

These were some suggestions given to the bank to have their lead loans work better:

- **Take a second look at each applicant and give the loan specialized attention.** If each case was looked at on an individual basis, perhaps more people would qualify. The bank assured us this is the case, and in Irvington the loans were reviewed 3 or 4 times.
- **Breaking down the loan into smaller loans, and have the work done incrementally.** If the person does not qualify for a \$15,000 loan, perhaps they would qualify for \$3,000 and the work could be done in stages.
- **Finding grant money, from the town or state to go with the loan.** There is grant money available through the State Dept. of Community Affairs, but a homeowner must apply through their municipality for this. More owners would be eligible and enthusiastic for the loans if even a \$2,000 grant from governmental or private sources was incorporated.
- **Making the loans a better deal.** This was suggested to make the loan more attractive. The bank pointed out the rates are below prime. Their Community Development Department is committed to this issue, but they are not at liberty to create loans further below the prime.
- **Getting tenants to make their landlords aware of these loans.** Unfortunately the realities of landlord / tenant relations in lead poisoning cases are not such that tenants would typically do this. Tenants generally feel powerless in these situations.
- **The bank could aggressively market these loans to property owners in general.** Even if they were not cited for lead yet, they could reduce their liability while increasing the value of their property. This would be a proactive approach, before children get poisoned.
- **Have lead hazards abated when the house is sold.** The example of Paterson was brought up, where real estate transactions, even rentals, require a lead inspection. However, this brings much resistance from the property owners and can bring property values down.

The Housing Committee of the Newark Partnership will be meeting soon. It was decided that exploring these suggestions would be a good project for them to work on. Summit Bank will be invited to the committee meetings and be involved in the process.

Anyone with questions about these loans should contact Lewis Hurd at Summit Bank, (908) 709-6371.